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NASA Procedural Requirements

COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**NPR 7900.3C**Effective Date: July
15, 2011Expiration Date: July
15, 2016[Printable Format \(PDF\)](#)

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(NASA Only)

Subject: Aircraft Operations Management Manual

Responsible Office: Aircraft Management Division

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Chapter 12. Assignment and Removal from Flight Status

12.1 Purpose

12.1.1 Aircrew members are assigned to flight status with approval from Center Directors and concurrence from HQ AD and the Center's Human Resources Office. Aircrew members may be removed from flight status on a temporary or permanent basis subsequent to mishap or high-visibility Close Calls, as defined in NPR 8621.1. These procedures are not intended to replace those applicable to events classified as Close Calls, pursuant to NPR 8621.1. Removal from flight status does not apply to medical disqualification (temporary or permanent).

12.2 Assignment Procedures

12.2.1 In general, designated NASA pilots/aircrew are those who perform piloting/aircrew duties as a part of their official position description or fly in accordance with an interagency agreement, such as a military pilot on loan to NASA. To be eligible to be assigned to flight status, aircrew members shall meet all applicable requirements of Chapters 3 and 4, any additional Center requirements, and will be assigned as either of the following:

- a. GS-2181, Aircraft Operations Series.
- b. GS-0861, Aerospace Engineering Series.

c. Meet the applicable series and grade requirements of the OPM qualification standard for a GS-2181, Aircraft Operations Series, in addition to the requirements in Chapters 3 and 4. Any waivers within this OPM qualification standard shall be approved only by the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Strategic Infrastructure. [552]

12.2.2 All series and grade requirements of OPM qualification standard for a GS-2181 apply to new hires (including contracted pilots flying NASA-owned aircraft) and current NASA pilots. Selecting officials may consider new hires who do not meet recency requirements when these candidates are otherwise qualified for the position and exceed all other GS-2181 series and grade requirements. For current NASA pilots, recency requirements in Chapters 3 and 4 apply.

12.2.3 Each Center Director and Chief of Flight Operations, in close coordination with the Center's Human Resources Office, shall establish a process to designate pilots and aircrew. [553] At a minimum, the process will include reviewing experience, FAA licenses/military designations, and flight log books in relation to the Center's flight requirements. To qualify for assignment as a NASA pilot of manned aircraft, only manned aircraft time shall apply. [554]

12.2.4 Each Center's Chief of Flight Operations shall establish procedures for assignment of aircrew to flight status and document those procedures in the Center Aviation Operations Manual. [555] Fully qualified NASA pilots may be assigned as UAS pilots, but for UAS pilots to fly manned NASA aircraft, they shall meet NASA pilot qualification minimums. [556] In addition, appropriate documentation should be contained in the aircrew member's official position description, per human resources procedures.

12.3 Removal Procedures

12.3.1 Each Center's Chief of Flight Operations shall establish procedures for temporary removal of aircrew personnel from flight status for situations other than medical disqualification (Chapter 7). [557] These procedures will be coordinated with the Center's human resources and legal offices. Chiefs of Flight Operations may, after consultation with the Center's legal and human resources offices, remove any aircrew member from flight status for 30 days or less. The Center Director, in accordance with human resources procedures, shall review and approve any non-medical-related proposal for removal from flight status in excess of 30 days. [558] Contract employee flightcrew members will be treated in accordance with the terms of the contract under which they are employed.

12.3.2 Prior to any action to removing aircrew members from flight status, the Chief of Flight Operations and Center Director will inform the aircrew member of the circumstances leading to the action. The Center Director and the Chief of Flight Operations, in close coordination with the Center's human resources office will determine how this action affects the member's ability to perform the duties, per the position description.

12.3.3 Removal from flight status can result from either a single event or multiple events that indicate the aviator has demonstrated:

- a. Faulty judgment in flight situations.
- b. Lack of general or specific flight skills.

c. Traits of character, emotional tendencies, or lack of mental aptitude or motivation that make it questionable to continue the member in assigned flying duties.

12.3.4 If the reason for removing the individual from flight status is an event that is properly classifiable as a Close Call, pursuant to NPR 8621.1, the process for investigation described therein shall be followed. [559] The results of that investigation will be used by management in determining the future assignment of flight duties to an individual that is the subject of an investigation, under NPR 8621.1.

12.3.5 Flight Performance Board. A Flight Performance Board may be convened if the Chief of Flight Operations deems the circumstances warrant such action. The board should be convened within 90 days of removal from flight status. The HQ AD can provide board membership recommendations upon request. The Chief of Flight Operations is the convening authority unless he/she is the direct supervisor of the individual that is the subject of the removal; in which case, the convening authority would be the Center Director. The convening authority will consult with the Center's legal and human resources offices, and HQ AD prior to establishing a board. Membership will be based upon the circumstances of each individual case. It is preferred that board members have experience as qualified aircrew members and be selected for the board based on their objectivity, experience, and a clear understanding of NASA's aviation mission. No Flight Performance Board should be formed for events that are properly classifiable as a Close Call, pursuant to NPR 8621.1.

12.3.5.1 Advisors may be assigned to the board at the discretion of the convening authority. Advisors will perform such duties as the board may require and may be included in deliberations at the board chair's discretion. At a minimum, one from each of the following specialties should be assigned as advisors:

- a. Flight surgeon.
- b. Legal counsel.
- c. Aviator from the Center's flight operations.

12.3.5.2 If a Flight Performance Board is convened, a flight status recommendation shall be delivered to the Center Director. [560] In the event that the board recommends removal from flight status, the recommendation should include a discussion on extenuation and mitigation factors that address the member's rehabilitation value. For example, remediation efforts for "faulty judgment in flight situations" or "lack of general or specific flight skills" may be corrected by appropriate training. "Traits of character, emotional tendencies, or lack of mental aptitude or motivation that makes it questionable to continue the member in assigned flying duties" may be remediated through counseling. Prior to permanent removal from flight status, an opportunity should be provided to the member for correcting deficiencies noted by a Flight Performance Board.

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